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## The Admiralty

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the reader follows the politics of the period and the related sweep of events, which includes the sinking of the *Lusitania* and culminates in the Battle of Jutland, is by following the careers of two American naval officers who have been assigned one each to the English and German Battle Fleets as observers, and who move back and forth to Europe from the States. Thus, besides political commentary the novel also embodies lively naval discussions and scenes, and gives the reader a vivid sense of the realities of the tactics, signals, and weapons of the time. However, while technical matters change from age to age, one is reminded by the novel's events that the essentials of decision, execution, and communications remain ever the same. The book also supports the necessity of preparedness and foresight, especially in an episode of wargaming at Newport by which the two American officers accurately forecast Jutland's later events. All of this representation of the naval affairs of the period seems carefully done.

But rather than diplomacy and naval operations, the novel's chief contribution is in its reminder that officers are also human beings, and as such often are involved in human drama and personal dilemmas that certainly include but also transcend their naval profession, and even sometimes call their professional goals and obligations into question. The personal lives of the officers in the novel are scrutinized deeply. Ultimately, the character of the two officers is the crux upon which the novel turns. In particular, it is decided upon a question of honor. And the novel is valuable in its convincing assertion that there really is such a thing, and that personal character is vital in an officer's professional decisions as in all human affairs. However, I should point out that it is an act of disobedience to an order—which the American officers consider an unlawful order—that works the successful resolution of the plot, and of American

involvement in the war. Given the context, this disobedience makes sense to me, but not everyone will agree.

The novel is not a great one, nor as gripping as some. But it is serious, well-crafted, and thought-provoking, and certainly a contribution to American naval literature.

ROBERT SHENK

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Rodger, N.A.M. *The Admiralty*. Lavenham, Suffolk: Terrance Dalton Ltd., 1979. 179pp.

Dr. Nicholas Rodger has produced the first scholarly survey of the administrative history of the Admiralty. Ranging from the medieval origins of the office of Lord Admiral to the creation of the Ministry of Defence in 1964, his book is a major contribution to English constitutional history as well as to naval history. Although it is a short volume, the author has masterfully summarized a wide range of literature in the light of a deep knowledge of the manuscript sources. With wit and keen appreciation for the telling quotation, the reader is presented with a survey that outlines the evolution of the Admiralty and the major influences that lay behind its development.

The Royal Navy has not lacked historians, but it has only been in the last 25 years that scholars have applied the standards of modern historical research to the administrative structure and direction that controlled and supported the ships and men at sea. There remains much for the historian to investigate and to explain, but this volume gives the first, satisfactory general framework upon which more detailed work can proceed. The author modestly admits that he has not covered the subject in the depth that he would prefer; however, one hopes that further, detailed studies will follow. While the reader may become so interested in the subject that he would like to have more

information, he will be, at the same time, grateful for the clear-sighted breadth of vision and the deep understanding of naval affairs which avoids a surfeit of administrative detail. In the present state of our historical understanding, Dr. Rodger has made the best choice in offering a carefully wrought, broad view rather than a definitive study.

The value and the nature of the author's method can be illustrated succinctly by quoting the striking judgment he makes after summarizing the Admiralty's administrative arrangements during the First World War:

Three and a half years and the loss of very many ships and lives had been required to rediscover and re-interpret in new circumstances the old truisms, on which the Navy's whole administrative system had for two centuries been based, that the functions of command and direction on the one hand, and of supply and sustenance on the other, are distinct but inseparable, and that neither can flourish, or even survive, without the other.

Focusing on the Navy's administrative history in this light, one can clearly evaluate the many vicissitudes and changes that took place over the centuries. Ranging from the creation of a permanent naval administration under Henry VIII, one learns how the office of Lord Admiral evolved from one of honor and profit to administrative responsibility. Later after the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham in 1628, the first board of Admiralty was created to carry out the functions of the Lord Admiral. By 1660, after alternating between individual appointments and commissions, traditions had been established that embodied the seminal concepts of administration to be developed in later centuries. Among them were the ideas that committees could be more stable than individuals as centers

of authority, and that such committees needed to be served by efficient and impartial secretaries. In this process, Samuel Pepys can be seen as the first civil servant.

From these beginnings, secretaries such as Josiah Burchett, Evan Nepean and Sir Oswyn Murray joined their efforts with Admiralty Boards under such leaders as Anson, St. Vincent, Churchill, Beatty, and Mountbatten. When the Admiralty was absorbed by the Ministry of Defence in 1964 it had survived more than 400 years as a department of state. As Dr. Rodger concludes,

Monarchs and dynasties, statesmen and ministries came and went, the tides of war and revolution washed over and around, constantly altering but never submerging the Admiralty, and it survived them all, counter, original, spare and strange to the last.

The student of naval history has been well served by this valuable perspective and excellent analysis.

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Sarkesian, Sam. *Defense Policy and the Presidency, Carter's First Years*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1979. 341pp.

The common thread of the essays in this study of the Carter Presidency is strong criticism of his national security policy. The Introduction promises an assessment of President Carter's first 2 years in office using a well-developed conceptual framework as an analytic tool. In fact the work has little in the way of paradigm as its basis and most of the articles review significantly less than the first 2 years of the Carter administration. The work is a hodgepodge of several articles that apparently were presented at a symposium and, as so often happens, it suffers from a lack of continuity and overall scholarly quality.